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MR. GEORGE HENSCHEL.

THE subject of our portrait this month has in a comparatively short time achieved a very prominent position as composer, vocalist and conductor in this country. His "symphony concerts" have come to be looked for as one of the principal features of the musical year, and the series just terminated, supplemented as it was by a grand Wagner concert with an orchestra of one hundred performers, has been well up to the high standard of excellence which we have learned to expect. Mr. Henschel has inherited through his great-grandfather a strain of Polish blood. To this circumstance he is, perhaps, indebted for some measure of that versatility and spontaneity which characterise his works. They are not altogether German, or, rather, they are German and something more. They contain an element of the unconventional, most agreeably grafted upon the traditional stock of the German School, and, while the composer is a very purist in harmony, he contrives to introduce novel effects and a rare individualism.

Mr. Henschel was born at Breslau in 1850, and having begun to learn the pianoforte at the age of five, he made his first public appearance as a pianist at the age of twelve. Schaeffer was at that time his master, from whom he also imbibed instruction in singing, being as a lad solo soprano vocalist at the University Church. At seventeen he entered the Leipsic Conservatoire, where under the tuition of Götze (with whom he continued privately until 1869) he developed a rich baritone voice. At the same time he studied composition and the pianoforte under Moscheles and Richter. In 1868 he attracted the attention of the Abbé Liszt upon whom he made a great impression by his singing at the Beethoven Festival held at Weimar in 1868. In 1870 he was still receiving instruction, this time in Berlin, where we find him under Frederick Kiel and Adolf Schulze. It will thus be seen that Mr. Henschel is by no means one of those who, after a slight grounding, embark on an independent artistic career. His studies were continued for a period extending over some sixteen years or more, and the results are proportionately brilliant, because built upon a solid basis of knowledge. At the Nether-Rhenish Festival of 1874 he achieved a phenomenal success, and shortly afterwards he went to America, where in 1879 he was appointed conductor of the Boston Symphony Concerts. In the same year he met Miss Lillian Bailey, a charming vocalist who will be remembered in this country by her maiden name, but more especially as Mrs. Henschel. The marriage took place in 1881, and since then this gifted couple have made London their headquarters. The London Symphony Concerts were organised in 1885, and in 1893 Mr. Henschel became conductor of the Scottish Orchestra. Both these organisations, though quite distinct, have worked harmoniously together, the Scottish Orchestra having sometimes taken the place of the London Band at the Symphony Concerts, and sometimes supplemented it, as on the occasion of the grand Wagner Concert abovementioned. From Easter 1886 to Easter 1888 he was Professor of Singing at the Royal College of Music.

Among the more important of his numerous compositions may be mentioned a gypsy Serenade with orchestra, a Serenade for "strings" in canon form, the 130th Psalm for soli, five-part chorus, and orchestra, and the incidental music to Mr. Irving's production of Hamlet. Besides these he has found time to write over two hundred songs, studies, pieces for the piano, &c., in addition to trios, quartets, and part songs. His latest great work is a Stabat Mater for soli, chorus, and orchestra, which was first performed at last year's Birmingham Festival in October, and since at Edinburgh and the Royal Albert Hall. This is perhaps his finest achievement as pure music, though its complex character renders it somewhat difficult of performance. Mr. Henschel has done much, and will do more, for music in England, which it is to be hoped he now definitely regards as the land of his adoption.

CURRENT NOTES.

For the first time this year Mdme. Patti appeared in London at the Philharmonic Concert of April 3rd. An interesting ceremony took place on that occasion, when she was presented with the Society's Beethoven gold medal by Mr. W. H. Cummings, the popular hon. treasurer. The Diva appeared to be much affected by the kindly and well-chosen words uttered in her praise by Mr. Cummings, and she left the platform under the influence of considerable emotion. The presentation was made after she had sung (in response to an encore) "Voi che Sapeto," from Le Nozze, but the audience, which was unusually large, insisted upon her singing yet a second encore. "Home, Sweet Home" was accordingly given, apparently for "Auld lang Syne," for hardly anybody present could have cared to hear this mawkish and feeble ditty-and thus Mdme. Patti sang three times instead of once, as arranged for her on the programme. She started with the evergreen "Una voce," and seemed to give great pleasure by her rendering of the florid passages. Her voice retains its charm and flexibility in a surprising manner, and her style, like that of Mr. Sims Reeves, is as perfect as ever.

It may be interesting to give a list of those whom the Philharmonic Society had previously deemed worthy of receiving the honour of decoration with the Beethoven medal. The names are, for the most part, distinguished in the ranks of music. Here they are:—Arabella Goddard, Charles Gounod, Joseph Joachim, Charles Santley, Sterndale Bennett, Hans von Bülow, Christine Nilsson, Theresa Tietjens, Johannes Brahms, Anton Rubinstein, Stanley Lucas, Helen Lemmens-Sherrington, William Cusins, Fanny Linzbauer (this lady presented the bust of Beethoven, which occupies a prominent position in front of the platform at every Philharmonic Concert), Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa and Louisa Pyne.

At the same concert Sir Alexander Mackenzie produced two new pieces from his own pen. These are entitled

"From the North," and as their name implies they are very Scotch. Indeed they are "based upon very old airs and dances, worthy of Scottish origin, or at least, in use in Scotland at a remote period." The first piece, Allegretto leggiero, is all too short; its merry themes are most captivatingly and ingeniously treated. The second, Vivoce, I liked less. The succession of short phrases interlarded with "pauses" gives a somewhat scrappy effect. But this impression may be corrected on a second hearing. The programme contained no other novelty, but the superb symphony of Brahms (No. 2 in D) which formed the second half of the concert, was magnificently played under Sir A. Mackenzie's direction, and proved a rich treat to those who remained to the end. Curiously enough, however, a great portion of the audience seemed only desirous of hearing Madame Patti, and hurriedly left when that lady had finished warbling. Perhaps "Home, Sweet Home" suggested their departure. Madame Patti has a lovely voice, and it is a thousand pities that she should seldom, if ever, use it upon any really worthy song. The tiresome and silly ditties she contrives to get hold of, from the rococo "Una voce" to the imbecile "Darling Mine" (by Mr. Louis Engel, late musical critic of the World) have always been a matter of intense surprise.

At the Royal Academy of Music a very successful terminal performance was given before a large gathering by the Operatic Class on April 4th. The second act of Wagner's Flying Dutchman and Cavalleria Rusticana was the selection for the evening. In the Flying Dutchman Miss Annie Morrison made a capable and sympathetic Senta, and the cast in Mascagni's work was as follows:—

Santuzza ... Miss Katie Thomas.
Turiddu ... Mr. Gwilym Richards.
Lucia ... Miss Lydia Cave.
Alfio ... Mr. Albert Henning.
Lola ... Miss Gertrude Bevan.

The importance of this operatic class cannot be overestimated. Not only do young vocalists find in it a natural and agreeable introduction to the stage, and learn to acquire confidence, ease, and dramatic gesture, but the class is also most valuable to the players in the orchestra, who acquire facility in accompanying the vocalists, and the faculty of humouring them in the liberties which they all take with their music.

ONE novelty, at least, is to be presented this season at the Covent Garden Opera, and that is Mr. F. H. Cowen's *Harold*, in which Madame Albani will "create" the chief part.

The Bach Festival which was held at the beginning of last month proved, on the whole, successful enough, in spite of the unavoidable absence of certain of the principal vocalists. The Mass in B minor, with which the celebration concluded, is, in itself, a mine of musical wealth; yet it was very little known in this country 20 years ago. Mr. Shakespeare took the tenor part in place of Herr Kaufmann, and once more showed his perfect mastery of voice-production. It is more pleasing to hear Mr. Shakespeare sing than it is to listen to numerous tenors who possess twice as much natural voice. On account of this knowledge of style and method alone he is one of the foremost teachers of the day. Mrs. Hutchinson, Miss Marian M'Kenzie, and Mr. David Bispham were all to be commended, as were the obligati carefully.

supplied by Herr Joachim (violin), Messrs. H. G. Leba and H. Smith (oboi d'amore), Mr. W. L. Barrett (flute), and Mr. A. Borsdorf (horn). The conductor, Professor Villiers Stanford, may be sincerely congratulated upon the general result.

On April 5th the students of the Royal Academ gave an orchestral concert at St. James's Hall, when the more prominent pupils appeared as executants though not on this occasion as composers. feature, perhaps, was Miss Sybil Palliser's brilliant rendering of two movements from Tschaïkowski's piam concerto in B minor, which had just previously been performed at the Philharmonic Society by Mr. Frederick Dawson, and at the Crystal Palace b M. Slivinski. Without inviting comparison with her senion Miss Palliser showed very unusual ability and promise. Other good items were the Andante from Langer's flut concerto in G minor, the solo part of which was neatly and sympathetically played by Mr. Michael Donawell; the violin concerto in B minor by Saint-Saëns delightfully and confidently rendered by Miss Gertrude Collins, young lady who has been taught to hold her violin and herself properly; and Cherubini's overture Fanisha Under a wholesome rule which deserves to be more generally adopted "No repetition of a piece, or re-calld a performer, is allowed at these concerts," and certainly me great desire was manifested for a repetition of Hayda's Canzonet, "She never told her love," which, though fairly well sung by Miss Clara Williams, proved to be a dreadfully commonplace affair.

LAST month the admirable winter series of Crystal Palace concerts came to a close. Mr. Manns was, I am glad to say, well enough to return to his post on April 6th, when the programme was entirely devoted to Wagner The greater part of The Flying Dutchman was got through with the utmost success, the chorus being efficient and Miss Ella Russell singing the music allotted to Sents with irresistible charm. The overture, one of the master's most characteristic efforts, produced a fine effect, and the pretty spinning chorus in the second act made one feel that this early work is now-a-days unduly neglected in favour of the composer's maturer developments. On April 13th the attendance, as is usual on Easter Eve, was comparatively small, the audience being evidently mainly restricted to musicians and those who were anxious to hear th pianoforte concerto by Eugen D'Albert. This young gentleman, born at Glasgow in 1864, is the son of the well-known writer of dance music. But though he received his early training at the South Kensington School of Music, he repudiated all connection with Great Britain when he at an early age settled in Germany. He is now Court Conductor at Weimar, and the Abbé Liszt, whose pupil he sometime was, greatly admired his talents. The concerto was heard at Sydenham for the first time, and proved to be eminently worth hearing. Mr. D'Albert has earned a great reputation abroad, his compositions being numerous and important. Among them may be mentioned an orchestral Suite, two overtures, the open entitled Der Rubin, a string quartet and two piano concertos.

Or these the one under notice is the second. It is in E major and marked "op. 12." The concerto consists of a single movement divided into four compartments, and the companion of the companion

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highest degree interesting because spontaneous and unusually intelligible, even at a first hearing. Its buoyancy and originality, not only of design, but of treatment, place it in a very different category from the works of most English-born musicians. The latter seem for the most part unable to escape from the thraldom of Mendelssohn, whose least favourable attributes they are apt to exaggerate. But Mr. D'Albert's leaning, if any, is towards the methods of Saint-Saëns and such "independents," though anything like eccentricity as contra-distinguished from individuality is sternly eschewed. Perhaps also the chastening influence of the divine Schumann may be traced in the lento of this concerto, though any such resemblances are, probably, mainly fanciful. The work must be regarded as the deliberate outcome of a true inspiration and genius. It is one to be thankful for, and long to hear again.

THERE was the usual crop of sacred concerts on Good Friday, when Gounod's Redemption was given by the Queen's Hall Choral Society, and about 10,000 persons assembled in the Albert Hall to hear The Messiah. A vast audience also enjoyed and joined in the music in the centre transept of the Crystal Palace; and St. James's Hall was crowded by those eager to hear Rossini's Stabat Mater, and a miscellaneous selection which included a fine air from Massenet's Marie Madeleine, a dramatic oratorio not yet known in this country. Miss Beatrice Frost sang this air with much feeling and taste. She is a new aspirant for vocal honours, and she shows great natural ability.

. . .

YET another German pianist made his appearance on Monday, April 22nd, at Steinway Hall. Dr. Neitzel, himself the composer and author of two operas, refrained from introducing any of his own works into his programme. Indeed, he confined his attention entirely to classical favourites, whereas he might surely have given Londoners an opportunity of hearing a new piece or two by one of his compatriots. In point of fact there is such a plethora of pianoforte recitals throughout the season that interest in new aspirants for public favour requires some stimulation. This might have been afforded by the inclusion of novelties in his scheme, but Dr. Neitzel evidently preferred to rest his claims on his reading of familiar works. He passed through the ordeal with much success, and the recitals will be continued up to May 16th. Dr. Neitzel is musical critic of the Kölnische Zeitung.

THE Post Office Musical Society gave their fifth annual concert at the Queen's Hall, on April 24th. To say that the auditorium was crowded only faintly expresses its congested condition. This was in great measure owing to the fact that far more tickets for the cheaper parts had been sold than the house could accommodate. Consequently every available nook and cranny was early seized upon, and many disappointed ticket holders were absolutely unable to gain admission. As in several instances they had come from long distances, the incident was the more regrettable and should act as a warning to those responsible for the management of future gatherings. The work selected for performance was Sir Arthur Sullivan's The Golden Legend, to which every justice was done by all concerned. The chorus, which is entirely, and the band which is mainly, composed of Post Office officials, sang and played with quite professional smartness and attack. Particularly excellent was the chorus in the Prologue, the Evening Hymn, "O

Gladsome Light," and the Epilogue. The solos were in the able hands of Mrs. Helen Trust, Miss Marian McKenzie, Mr. Edward Lloyd, Mr. Charles Hinchcliff, and Mr. Andrew Black, and this fine cantata met with unusual appreciation from an exceptionally intelligent and discriminating audience.

Under the skilful guidance of Mr. Stewart Macpherson the Westminster Orchestral Society gains annually increased efficiency. The last concert of the season was held on Wednesday evening in last week at the Westminster Town Hall, and the performance of Mendelssohn's "Italian" symphony, which demands considerable capability, was extremely creditable to all concerned. The same may be said of the orchestral accompaniment to Beethoven's Violin concerto. The soloist in the latter was Signor Simonetti, whose refined method was as acceptable as ever.

HERR HERMANN LEVI, the celebrated conductor of Munich, presided at the first of five Wagner concerts announced by Mr. Alfred Schulz Curtius. The third will be conducted by Herr Siegfried Wagner, and the remainder by Herr Felix Mottl. Herr Levi was born in 1839, and among other distinctions, he conducted the first performances of Parsifal in 1882. The Queen's Hall was densely crowded, and though the programme was familiar, the individuality of Herr Levi's reading was most interesting. For instance, he played the "March of the Haldigungs" slower than usual, and in Beethoven's Seventh Symphony he departed here and there from tradition. Fräulein Ternina, from the Munich Opera House, made her first appearance in London and created a very favourable impression.

MR. MANNS'S Benefit Concert on the 27th ult. was made the occasion of a special ovation to the conductor. Mr. Edward Lloyd sang finely Gounod's " Lend me your aid," but I much regret to add that Miss Ella Russell was unable to appear owing to the death of her mother in the early morning. One of the most interesting pieces heard for a long time was Mr. Richard H. Walthew's setting of Browning's "Pied Piper of Hamelin." This was practically a novelty, though it had been produced two years ago at Highbury. It is one of the cleverest and most pleasing choral ballads, and deserves far more space than can be devoted to it here. The composer has surmounted the difficulties inherent in a musical treatment of Browning's rough and frequently halting lines in masterly fashion. The distribution of the narrative among the chorus and the soloists is most intelligent, and the whole effect is round and symmetrical to an unusual degree, without the faintest shade of monotony. The performance reflected credit on the choir, who had a very difficult task.

On Saturday evening last Benedict's charming opera, The Lity of Killarney, was given at Drury Lane before an enthusiastic audience, who evidently cheered the familiar incidents of the story (that of The Colleen Bawn) as much as the music. Mdme. Fanny Moody surpassed herself as Eily O'Connor, and brought tears to many eyes by her rendering of the ballad "1'm alone." Mr. Ludwig showed great dramatic force as Danny Mann, and Mr. James Glover conducted with ability and success.

WORDS FOR MUSIC.

WE hear a great deal now, and quite rightly too, about the necessity of a non-musical education for the musician. The time is rapidly passing away when it was possible for him to be a musician and nothing more. We have come to see that now-a-days over-specialisation of any kind invariably tends to react injuriously on that very department of activity for the sake of which the specialisation is undertaken. It is not that the musician must have his head crammed with mere facts, which he can throw off mechanically under examination, if need be; it is that he must have that education which consists in acquiring the power to think-the capacity of appreciating all branches of literature and art, as well as the wider fields of knowledge. Now-a-days, any narrowness of mental culture invariably makes itself felt in some way or other; the musician who is a musician and nothing more is not only a very monotonous individual, but also in the great majority of cases, not in the very first rank of musicians themselves. There are so many side interests which come into the art-points at which music touches all sorts of wider fields; and most of all is it necessary that the musician who, as a part of his regular profession, adds music to words, should have much more than a superficial acquaintance with literature. His artistic capacity will show itself no less in his choice of words, supposing that choice to be free and unfettered, than in the actual quality of his music.

It is an interesting study to consider how the great musicians of the past have regarded this question of literature in connection with music. To a very large extent, of course, the greater fusion of literary and artistic culture is a thing of the present day, and we must not look for ideals of this too closely in the past. There are, indeed, cases in Handel which rather look as if he did not trouble himself even about the grammatical intelligibility of the words as he set them; and in a great number of instances the words are perfectly colourless and would fit any sort of music about equally well. The custom of repeating words ad libitum had a great deal to do with this divorce of literary and musical interests, and it quite spoils the complete artistic beauty of many of even Schubert's songs. Schubert, indeed, is the last great type of the musician pure and simple-often, of course, his words are among the greatest lyrics in German literature, but often again they are feeble in the extreme. It is easy to see how, with his headlong methods of composing, he would simply fasten on any words that came to hand, whether they might be by Goethe or Heine, or by someone entirely unknown to fame-all were perhaps very much alike to him. It is only another example of the carelessness that mars the work of the composer who was perhaps the greatest natural musical genius that everlived. But since Schubert, the greatest song-writers have been much more careful in choice of words. Schumann, Brahms, Franz, all show a literary taste in their selections that was quite outside Schubert's powers. All Brahms' great choral works, for example, are noble poetry as well as noble music; and the day seems well past when a great composer can venture to mate his music with unworthy words. Most of all, perhaps, is this seen in the sphere of opera. Mozart's libretti often come very near the verge of unconscious ludicrousness-Beethoven contented himself with a by no means perfect book in Fidelio-Weber secured libretti with a certain number of strong situations, but very little poetry-Mendelssohn could find nothing at all till the last months of his

life-and Schumann's Genoveva fell hopelessly to the ground as neither dramatic nor literary. It was a real stroke of genius on Wagner's part when he finally determined to write his own libretti; he was himself a poet of very considerable attainments, the wonderful poetry of Isolde's death-song being perhaps his highwater mark, and he saw clearly that there was an immeasurable gain in having the whole work done by one hand. Oute apart from all the dramatic advantages of freedom from anything like either writing or composing to order, there was the advantage of having poetry to set and not doggerel. Of course Wagner was an example of the fusion of accomplishments such as is very rarely seen; but his example has had a great influence on librettists, who, as a rule, now do their best, at any rate, to write something worth reading for its own sake. The days when a libretto for music might, without much injustice, have been defined as anything which no one would dream of taking seriously as literature have now practically gone for ever, at any rate as far as the great musicians are concerned. There is a great leap in literary culture from the words of Don Giovanni or The Mount of Olives to those of Tristan or the Schicksalslied. When the foremost composers habitually, as far as they can, set great existing poetry, instead of having words written for them, the advance in literary appreciation is enormous.

In England, perhaps, we are still rather behindhand. We have not quite passed out of the stage of the doggerel oratorio and cantata, and of the drawing-room song which even the persons who sing it would not venture to read aloud. We still find a great deal of music set to words that from a literary, emotional, ethical, or any other conceivable point of view are totally worthless. But still, even under such circumstances, we are advancing rapidly. There are very few musicians of note in England now who lend themselves to these pretentious inanities; and in the foremost rank we have two composers who can both assert with pride that they have never set to music words which were not poetry. Merely to glance through a string of names of choral works-Prometheus Unbound, The Glorius of our Blood and State, Blest Pair of Sirens, St. Cecilia's Day-or again, The Revenge, Come Lovely and Soothing Death, The Voyage of Maeldune, Eden - all these are true poetry; and examples such as these are of quite incalculable influence. Already we see in the younger school of British composers unmistakeable signs that literature is winning a proper place in the thoughts of musicians. We can afford to leave the doggerel to the composers who like it without any unnecessary indignation; they have no sort of influence on the real artistic future of English music.

But still we have not finally settled the question when we have discarded mere "verse" and pinned our faith to poetry of some sort or another. There is a great deal of poetry of the highest order that is altogether unsuitable for musical setting-a fact that ardent literature-loving composers have not always fully kept in mind. Words of a purely philosophical or didactic tendency, for example, are almost impossible to set suitably—there is no musical "note" in them, to use Matthew Arnold's convenient phrase, on which a composer can seize. Reflective and meditative poetry occupies a sort of border-ground, but a great deal of the noblest work of this kind is altogether outside the composer's range. The two departments of poetry that may vaguely be described as the lyrical and the epic are the real home of the composer, the former preeminently The ordinary dramatic poem, not written with any idea of musical setting, is, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, impossible for the composer's purposes without all sorts of

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rearrangements; and the same recasting is usually indispensable with a lengthy poem which it is desired to turn into a libretto for a cantata. But cases such as these are outside our present scope; the original poem cannot remain the same when it is twisted about to suit the exigencies of musical effectiveness. It is next to impossible for a composer, who is not a poet himself, to secure absolute faithfulness to the originals in any form but the song or the short choral work. And in these cases it is only due to the author of the words that they shall not be altered or mutilated in any form-portions may of course alone be set, but there must be no changing of the poet's point of view, no stultifying of the end of his work. Still, as we said, the musician must have the instinct of selection. He will not restrict himself to merely a few spheres of emotion-he can range from the lightest specimen of folk-song to lofty speculations such as have inspired Brahms' great choral works; but throughout he will have the double end in view-the literary value of the poem, and its suitableness for musical setting.

Still, we often hear it said by musicians who have the literary instinct as strongly developed as anyone could wish, that after all the most suitable words for music are those that are just on the border of the second-ratenot, of course, anything approaching the negation of literature, but just short of the highest class. And perhaps, in some ways, there is reason for such a view. It might be said that the greatest poems, by their very greatness, take away some of the interest and value from any musical setting that may be given them-that we cannot have two arts at their very highest at once. We may try to support this view by instances-we may point out that Hölderlin's Schicksalslied, the music to which is probably Brahms' masterpiece, is, though a fine poem, nowhere near the height of Goethe's Gesang der Parzen, the setting of which is perhaps hardly musically so perfect. We may say that Schubert's Die junge Nonne, to Craigher's impressive but scarcely great words, is a more perfect song than any of the settings of the Harper's lyrics from Wilhelm Meister. But we cannot really come to any categorical conclusions on the point. Schumann's songs never reach a higher point than when dealing with Heine's perfect words; Franz and other modern songwriters are often at their best when their words are as fine as anything in nineteenth century lyrical literature. Of course, when a composer writes at all fluently, it is impossible that he should always confine himself to solely the very highest class of poetry-there is not enough of it in the world; but at any rate he need never look for his inspiration to words below a good second-rate standard. The settings of the finest words may not always necessarily be the finest music; but under any circumstances the music will be joined to words which are real poetry, that we could read with appreciation as pure literature. at least is due, in the merest courtesy, from one great art

ERNEST WALKER.

VARIA.

The performances of the Bach Choir at the beginning of the past month suggest some interesting questions as to the raison d'être of what are known as "additional accompaniments." In these concerts, Bach's scores were religiously adhered to—there were no extra instruments employed, and, as far as possible, all the original effects were retained. The only defect was that, in the passages where strings and wind are contrasted, the former were

far too strong, and personally we cannot see why the wind was not increased so as to correspond in power of tone. But there are many persons who object to these "purist" renderings as unsatisfactory-they wish for the greater variety and fulness of sound of later orchestration, and urge that the composer is not really done justice to when his own "meagre" scoring is retained. They say that it has been found impossible to produce Handel's music as he wrote it, and that it should be equally discredited so to produce Bach's. But we must confess that we are personally altogether on the side of the so-called "purists" on this question. We live in hope of one day hearing the Messiah in Handel's version-neither in Mozart's nor Franz's-with the figured basses filled up plainly on the organ (or sometimes perhaps on the pianoforte), the proper balance of oboes and bassoons, and no extra instruments of any kind whatever. Why this should be impossible we quite fail to see; it would be different from what we ordinarily hear, no doubt -but what we do hear is simply not Handel, nor often (in Mozart's scores at any rate) even anything like Handelian in style. It is said that the old scoring offends our ears; but it is not our business to touch up the work of the great men of the past, simply because they had not the privilege, according to our notions, of living in the nineteenth century. They are responsible for the effect of their work, and that is the end of it. To say that they would have used a modern band if they could, or to talk of giving their music the benefit of latter-day orchestration, is just the same as to assert that Chaucer's poetry would be much improved, and that he would have been the first to recognise the fact, were it adapted to the metrical schemes of Mr. Swinburne. We lose the whole sense of historical proportion when we force the music of Bach or Handel into modern tone-colouring. Of course there are some cases, outside the figured basses, where the old musicians left, so to speak, gaps to be filled up by the general intelligence of their performers-but this sort of "additional accompaniment" is perfectly distinct from that to which we object. Our protest is simply against anything like a re-writing of the score in any shape or form whatsoever. In the case of obsolete instruments, if these cannot be procured, the best substitutes possible must be provided; but there must be no arranging trumpet passages for clarinets, and things of that sort, and the wood-wind must always be increased so as to suitably balance the strings-a matter hardly ever satisfactorily arranged. We can really see no halting-place between an arrangement of a Handel or Bach score for "modern" purposes (not to mention downright alterations of the music like much of Mozart's work in this line) and monstrosities like Klindworth's version of Chopin's F minor Concerto, or, still worse, Tausig's of that in E minorwhere, under the plea of making the works more "effective," the orchestration is radically altered throughout, the piano part re-arranged on the " greatest difficulty " principle, and (in the Tausig instance) a great deal of the music altogether thematically changed. No doubt Chopin's orchestration is not his strong point, and his writing for the piano unfortunately hardly difficult enough for the modern player to make an adequate personal display; but the composer alone is responsible for his work, and any meddling with it is simply gross impertinence. Let us face the matter logically; why should we not, on such principles, bring out up-to-date editions of Beethoven's symphonies, with tubas and English horns, or virtuoso transcriptions of the sonatas? Why should we not repaint a Giotto picture with the colouring of Mr.

Sargent, or rewrite Spenser in the style of Browning? Anyone of proper modernity of taste must see much that is painfully antiquated in the productions of any person so unfortunate as to have been born in a past generation—why not alter everybody's work to suit the time, with revised editions every twenty years or so?

. . .

THE anniversary of the birthday of Joachim Raff, which falls within the present month, suggests some considerations about this most singular composer. In the pure technique of composition Raff had no superior among all the musicians of his time. His mastery over all the intricacies of contrapuntal work is little short of marvellous; the most elaborate combinations are woven with the utmost dexterity and fluency, and there is never the least sign of effort-all the subtleties of canon and double and triple counterpoint sound exactly as if they had fallen into such a form merely by accident. His orchestral effects are always admirable, and his writing for every instrument perfect from a technical aspect; and when he frankly makes experiments, he does so with wonderful success, as for example in the timeless Scherzo of the first Violin Sonata, where bars of two, three, four, and five crochets are mixed up at random with an amazingly spontaneous result. Wagner used to speak of the music of Berlioz, perhaps rather too depreciatingly, as "diabolically clever"-and the epithet applies to Raff quite as much. But Berlioz, with all his theatrical desire to astonish merely for the sake of astonishing, reached something very like genius of a high order in his greatest works, while Raff hardly ever rises much above the common level of inspiration. He was gifted with a fatal facility; his works run up to Op. 216, and include eleven symphonies and countless productions in almost equally extended forms. He had no sense of selection-whatever came into his head seems to have gone straight down on paper, and the result is that we find ideas of real value side by side with the merest commonplaces, and very often, it must be said, the merest vulgarities also. Take his Lenore Symphony, probably his best-known work. The first two movements have really some beautiful ideas here and there, but they are never worked out as they deserve -the march has a certain picturesqueness in the midst of its undeniably commonplace themes-but the finale, with its wild ride and its spectres and demons, is one of the most singular mixtures of the ludicrous and the vulgar to be found in modern music. If we compare the treatments of an exactly similar subject by Berlioz in his Damnation de Faust and Dvôrak in his Spectre's Bride, we see the immeasurable difference. No one feels inclined to laugh at these, while it is difficult to do anything else when listening to Raff's childish pantomime. Yet there are others of his symphonies, now never performed, which have touches of something like greatness flashing out occasionally by fits and starts; but there is little doubt that his music is, as a whole, now far advanced on the high road to oblivion. All the cleverness in the world cannot avail to preserve the work of a composer who appears to have been incapable of distinguishing between genuine inspiration and the merest hack-work, and never used the pruning-knife to his productions. His finer taste seems to have been blunted by the struggles of his early years, when he was obliged to write polkas and galops, and they took the public by storm; unfortunate drawing-room successes like these easily lead a musician to think that after all one idea is very nearly as good as another, and that at any rate, ninety-

nine persons out of a hundred will not know the difference. That may well be; but there comes a time when he is found out, and Raff, with all his talents, is bearing the burden now.

THERE is a book recently published, entitled, " Letters of a Baritone," which, in many ways, is interesting as an example of a particular musical turn of mind. The author is a singer who studied in Florence, and his book is made up of enthusiastic descriptions of his work there, with general reflections on musical matters. While we frankly acknowledge that we disagree altogether with the general point of view adopted in the book, yet we readily admit the force of some of the author's arguments. There can be little doubt that the Italian method of vocal study leads, as a rule, to the production of a voice of great physical and technical excellence; speaking generally, it teaches such matters as voice-physiology, breathing, tone-gradations, more perfectly than any other-that is to say, it turns out as nearly faultless a mechanical organ as any training can do. But, unfortunately, the author of "Letters of a Baritone," and, we fear, too many other singers as well, seem to think that this result is all that a vocal training aims at-anything like a training in artistic appreciation seems altogether outside their thoughts. He asks indignantly with reference to the typical so-called Wagnerian singer-" How can a man be an artist who sings out of tune for a whole act?"-without pausing to consider the answer that no doubt he would be a better singer if he sang in tune, but that he may be a real artist for all his deficiencies in that respect. The entire musical horizon of the Italian method, as he quite frankly confesses, and is inclined to deplore, is confined to Rossini and Verdi and their like-which is as much as to say that the method is a purely mechanical one; it is a purely operatic culture, and is restricted to that branch of opera which is artistically the most inferior of all. The author is continually talking in the most naïve manner of "cadences"-how his master used to re-write them for him, without apparently the least qualms of conscience as to the composer-and there are enthusiastic anecdotes of a top C six times repeated, and all the regular personal-glorification-style of the old Italian opera. He is kind enough to express some approval of Parsifal, but prefers the feeble " Evening Star" Ode from Tannhäuser, because of its "melting vocal phrases"; and in speaking condescendingly of modern songs, he classes Brahms quite innocently along with Jensen and Lassen and composers of even less fame. It is an old story, one of the oldest in musical history; the typical solo-singer, of all artists, is the one most hopelessly given to the pernicious doctrine of personal display, whatever the value of the music and whatever the intentions of the composer. Is this vocally effective? is his first thought; is it good music? is a thought that comes a long way after. We do not wish for a moment to deny that much modern German music makes extreme demands on the physical endurance of singers; but to assert that the late Wagner works ruin the voice, is palpably ridiculous when we think of the superb voices, merely as natural organs, of the greatest "Wagnerian" singers. Of course such music requires intellectual and artistic capacities in the performer which the Rossini school never dreamt of even taking into account; but the fact that Italian singers cannot sing modern German music is no reason for asserting that such music brings about deterioration of the voice. We quite admit that many German singers would be very much the better for more vocal method, more attention to technique and voice-production; but

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they may well be excused if, when exhorted to study in Italy, they reply that an artist now-a-days has worthier work to do than to waste his time learning to sing Donizetti roulades. A singer is not a mere barrel-organ, made to turn out tunes in as perfectly correct a manner as possible; he has no right to style himself a musician unless he has gone through the great vocal works from Bach and Handel to Wagner and Brahms, and intellectually and artistically understands them. He can find just as good technical exercises in the operas of Mozart as in those of Bellini, and a great deal else besides.

E. W.

MUSIC IN COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS.

** In view of the musical influence of Colleges and Public and High Schools, we shall be glad to receive communications respecting any musical events that may take place. Such notices, however, should reach us by the 18th day of the month.

HIGHBURY HIGH SCHOOL.—At the distribution of prizes, which took place on March 26th, a musical programme was performed, under the direction of Mr. John Farmer, when various school songs from the conductor's pen were given by the whole school, as well as a three-part setting of "Orpheus with his Lute," by Mr. Edward German, and a remarkable two-part canon to words from Milton's "Ode on the Nativity," by Miss A. E. Horrocks, which were sung by a select body of sopranos and altos from the Upper School.

DOINGS IN THE PROVINCES.

** To obviate any interesting event in the Suburbs or Provinces escaping attention, we shall be glad to receive communications from local correspondents. These, however, must reach us before the 18th day of the month.

GLASGOW .- Unlike London, the Glasgow musical season is practically at an end for some months. We have still a little music at the theatres-the D'Oyly Carte's company is with us now and is to be succeeded by a week of the "Carl Rosa." The burning of the Theatre Royal has cut short their season and they are obliged to take refuge in the Royalty, a much smaller house.-The Thornliebank Choral Society, under Mr. John Burns Thomson, gave a very good rendering of L. N. Parker's "Silvia," which is still a great favourite here, with its melodious choruses and taking solos. The principals were Miss Agnes Thomas, Miss Nellie Moir, Mr. Geo. Neil, and Mr. Hugh Gillespie.-The St. Peter's Episcopal Choir, under the leadership of Mr. Gray, the organist, gave a most enjoyable concert of sacred music consisting of the cantata Ferusalem, by W. H. Dixon, and other selections .-The concert of the Glasgow Glee and Catch Club, which is always eagerly looked forward to, took, as usual, the form of a "Smoker," in the Grand Hotel, on Thursday night. A new glee "Harvest-Tide," the composition of Mr. T. S. Drummond, was the feature of the evening. Callcott's "Green Thorn," Hatton's "Absence," Parry's "In a Cell," with solos by the members, filled up a most enjoyable evening. Mr. Allan Young conducted with his usual ability, and, like other old glee singers, deplores the scarcity of male altos, which precludes him from including in his répertoire some of the fine old English glees, a style of composition, by the way, which appears to be a

BECKENHAM.—At the Public Hall, on March 27th, Miss Muriel Nixon gave an evening concert, assisted by Miss Evelyn Wilkie (vocalist), Miss Annie Sayer (violinist), Miss Madge Coulborn and Mr. Bernard Fowles (pianists), and Miss Blanche Cusins (accompanist). The programme was of striking merit, including Bach's French Suite in E, a Mozart Violin Sonata, Schumann's Andante and Variations for two pianofortes, and other works, in all of which Miss Nixon took part—besides Chopin's G minor Ballade, Bruch's Swedish Dances for Violin, and songs by Jensen and Miss Blanche Cusins (Mrs. Nixon).

SPENNYMOOR WESLEYAN CHURCH CHOIR.—The above choir gave a performance of a sacred cantata entitled Belshazzar's Feast on Good Friday. The cantata was excellently rendered. Mr. R. P. Bethell as Belshazzar, Mr. Baines as Daniel, and Miss E. Starforth as Nitocris, won the applause of the audience. The choruses were well rendered, great credit being due to Mr. T. Westwater (conductor), Miss L. Blackburn (organist), and Mr. Laws (leader of the band).

BISHOP AUCKLAND.—In connection with the Bondgate Mutual Improvement Class on Thursday, April 4th, Mr. Nicholas Kilburn, Mus. Bac., delivered a lecture entitled "A Gallery of Musicians." The lecture consisted of short sketches of some men whose lives had more or less influenced the world of art. The chief examples were: Purcell, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt, Wagner, Gounod, Sullivan, Mackenzie, Cowen, Parry, and Prout. The lecture was very interesting, being illustrated by screen pictures worked by Mr. Spark.

* The letters of our Liverpool and Newcastle correspondents have been delayed this month.

SOME FOREIGN ITEMS.

It is announced that Herr Eugen d'Albert has definitely accepted the post of Court Conductor at Weimar, and will enter upon his new sphere of work in the autumn, when Max Schilling's new and successful "music-drama" Ingwelde will be produced. Herr d'Albert's duties will, however, leave him the time for appearing at concerts as before, as well as for developing his very great talents for composition. It is to be hoped that some time, sooner or later, English audiences may have an opportunity of hearing the artist whom the best judges unite in recognising as indisputably the greatest living pianist.

THE Berlin Philharmonic Choral Society has, it is said, abandoned the idea of performing Berlioz's Requiem again in the Prussian capital, as the work necessary for the production of Bach's B minor Mass has been so heavy as to demand the postponement of all other arrangements.

Godard's posthumous opera, La Vivandière, which has been completed by M. P. Vidal, was produced on the 1st of April, at the Opéra Comique at Paris, with a fair amount of success. There was no doubt, however, about the brilliant performance of the title rôle by Mlle. Delna, who has been generally recognised as one of the most striking artists on the operatic stage; and we trust we may have the opportunity of hearing her again in London during the coming season.

THE honorary membership of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde of Vienna—a distinction much sought afterhas been lately conferred on Ambroise Thomas, A. Gevaert, Eduard Hanslick, Antonin Dvôràk, Franz Wüllner, Carl Reinecke, and Edward Grieg—a very notable list on the whole. Dr. Hanslick has retired from the chair of musical history at the University, and Dr. Guido Adler has been appointed to fill his place.

The choir of St. Gervais at Paris, which is noted for its rendering of old ecclesiastical music, has been recently giving performances of Palestrina's Stabat Mater, some of Lassus' Penitential Psalms, six of Bach's cantatas, a Mass of Byrd, and other works.

An industrial exhibition will take place at Strassburg this summer, and musical performances will have an important place in the *fêtes*. No fewer than three complete orchestras will, it is said, give concerts: the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra, that of the Colonne Concerts of Paris, and that of the La Scala Orchestral Society of Milan.

HERR SIEGFRIED WAGNER recently appeared for the first time at Rome, where he conducted a concert of his father's works with the greatest success, every number on the programme being enthusiastically received. He has, it is said, lately completed a choral setting of one of Schiller's lengthier poems, which may perhaps be brought to a hearing in London in the course of the coming season.

A ONE-ACT opera called "Enoch Arden"—the libretto being adapted from Tennyson's poem—has recently been very successfully produced at Frankfort. The music is by Herr Robert Erben, second Kapellmeister of the Stadt Theater in that city.

THE famous "Wagner Museum" of Herr Oesterlein, which forms an altogether unique collection, has now, it is said, finally found a home at Eisenach, after having been refused at Baireuth and temporarily lodged in Vienna. It is in many ways fitting that a town so intimately connected with Bach should acquire so interesting a memorial of one of Bach's greatest admirers.

THE annual Lower Rhine Music Festival will be held this year at Cologne at Whitsuntide. The programmes will, it is said, include among other works, Haydn's rarely heard "Seasons," a choral setting of Heine's "Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar," by Humperdinck (which should prove very interesting, in view of the wonderful success of his altogether charming Hänsel und Gretel), scenes from Richard Strauss' opera Guntram, and a Te Deum by Herr Wüllner, the famous Cologne conductor.

VERDI'S Falstaff has been recently given for the first time at Copenhagen under the direction of Herr Johann Svendsen. The reception of the work, though favourable, was hardly as enthusiastic as it has been in most other places.

Hans Sommer's Lorelei has been lately given with the greatest success at the Court Theatre at Schwerin; and it is announced that a one-act opera from the same pen, Der Meermann, will be produced shortly at the Royal Opera House, Stuttgardt. Herr Sommer is one of those less known German composers whose music might well be far more widely celebrated. His songs are, however, thanks to the efforts of a few artists, becoming more and more known in England; and certainly such perfectly individual and masterly productions as Odysseus or Stelldichein have only to be heard to be appreciated as the work of a really original composer.

REVIEWS.

Three Songs. Words by John Hay. Music by A. C. Mackenzie, Op. 54. (Joseph Williams.)

This is a set of thoughtful and musicianly lyrics, in all of which the voice-part and the accompaniment are both thoroughly well written. The first, "Student Song," has excellent vigour and directness; the second, "The Light of Love" (with a very Brahms-like cadence), is more romantic, but is quite free from any unpleasant sentimentality; and the third, "Expectation," is, we think, in its energy and straightforward passion, one of the best of Sir Alexander Mackenzie's songs. The effect of the climax rising one note higher in each verse is decidedly striking, and the modulation back into the original key on the last page is admirably worked. The D flat on the last bar but five of page 14 is, we suppose, a misprint for D natural. Of course all the three songs demand considerable attainments from singer and accompanist alike-Sir Alexander Mackenzie is far too good a musician to stultify his ideas by making their expression "easy" merely for the sake of easiness.

The Two Angels. Words by John Greenleaf Whittier. (Same composer and publisher.)

WE can hardly, we fear, speak of this song as highly as of the three mentioned above. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, of course, never sinks anywhere near the depths of the ordinary religious drawing-room song; but the music of "The Two Angels" will scarcely, we think, do much to advance his reputation. But a musician is of necessity very largely hampered by the words he has to set; and it would be difficult for the greatest of composers to extract any adequate musical ideas from Whittier's feebly pretentious verses, which come as near as the work of a poet well can to the drawing-room ballad style of religious "literature."

WE have also on our table the following publications of Messrs. Ashdown:

Impromptu and Mazurka for Pianoforte, by Franz

Romance, Gavotte, and Marche Militaire for Pianoforte, by J. H. Wallis.

Festive March for Pianoforte, by Thomas Lee.

Impromptu-Gavotte, Rondino Grazioso, Scherzo and Bourrée Nouvelle, for Pianoforte, by Walter Macfarren.

Six Characteristic Pieces for Violin and Pianoforte, by Guido Papini.

Meditation in B flat for Organ, by J. P. Mills. Offertoire in D for Organ, by Edward Cutler.

Four Sonatinas for Violin and Pianoforte, by H. E.

Six Pieces, by Michael Watson, arranged for the Organ by Edwin M. Lott.

Spring, duet for Pianoforte, by Charles Salaman.

Gavotte and Musette for Pianoforte, by Walter Fitton.
And also vocal compositions by Marie Wurm, Agnes S.
Buck, Lizzie Hartland, Seymour Smith, Henry Parker,
Michael Watson, and Ciro Pinsuti.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters connected with the literary department of this Journal must be addressed to the Editor, 44, Great Marlborough Street, W.

Communications intended for insertion will receive no notice unless accompanied by the name and address of the sender.

The EDITOR cannot undertake to return articles of which he is unable to make use.

All business letters should be addressed to the Publishers.

Advertisements should reach the Office of the Publishers, 44, Great Marborough Street, W., not later than the 20th in order to insure insertion in the issue of the month current.

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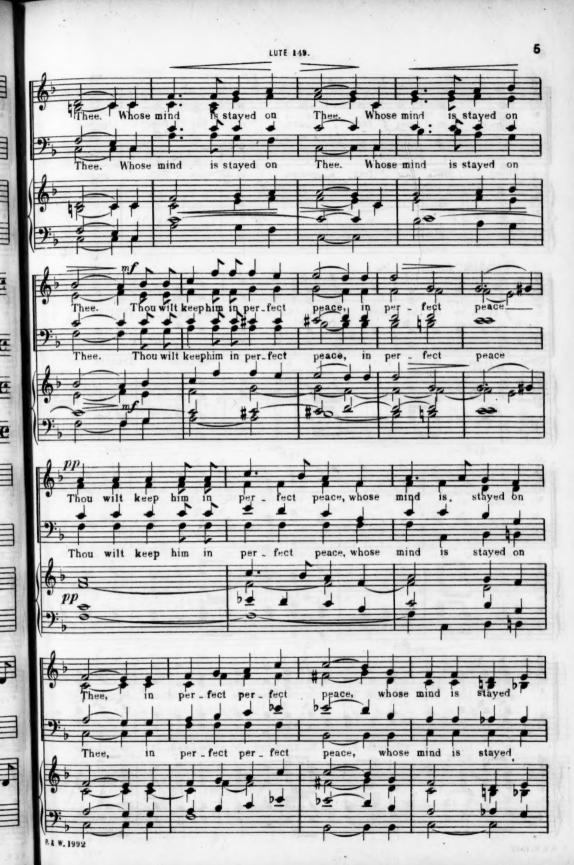
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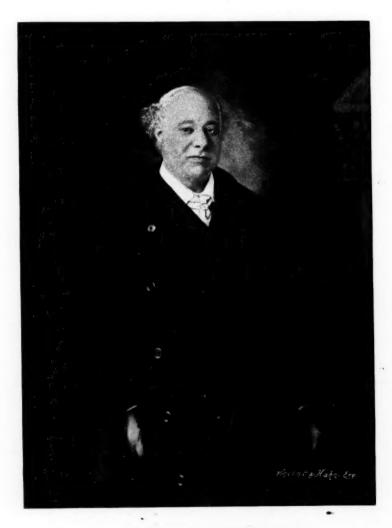
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